

The Berea School of Theology on Internet

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Studies in the Gospel of Mark

Introduction to the Gospel of Mark

The early church ascribed this second Gospel to John Mark, the son of a certain Mary of Jerusalem (Acts 12: 12). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary tour (Acts 13:5), but for some reason left them at Perga (Acts 13:13). Later Paul and Barnabas separated because the apostle Paul refused to have Mark on the second tour. Mark accordingly went with Barnabas. Later Paul and Mark were reconciled (Col. 4: 10-11). That Mark is the author of this gospel is mentioned by Papias about A.D. 135, Justin Martyr, about A.D. 150, as well as by Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus much later.

Parallelism between Matthew and Mark

Matthew	Mark
Jesus as King Jews in mind	Jesus as Servant Gentiles in mind

Jesus predicted miracle-working King	Jesus the miracle-working Servant
Rooted in Old Testament Prophecy	Much fewer O.T. prophetic references
Key in God's purpose for Israel	Key in God's purposes for the world
Deity of the king by birth, fulfilled prophecy, works.	Deity of the servant by mighty works.
Events recorded concerning the King – His genealogy, birth in Bethlehem, visit of the wise men, childhood in Nazareth.	All these omitted as not appropriate to the Servant portrait.
Sermon on Mount, spoken as King, giving the principles of the kingdom.	Omitted
Many parables included which belong to this gospel of the King but not appropriate to the gospel of the servant.	Omits many of the parables – five of those in Matthew 13; numerous others, and particularly those of Matthew 25.
Presents the King of the Jews rejected, the mystery form of the kingdom from His rejection to His second advent to restore the kingdom to Israel.	Presents the Servant of the Lord in life, death, resurrection bringing salvation to humankind.

As the Evangelist Matthew wrote for the Jews distinctively, so it is said that the Evangelist Mark wrote for the Gentile. The interior evidence for this is as follows: For instance, unlike Matthew, he omits practically all quotations from the Old Testament prophets. With the exception of the one such reference at the beginning of his Gospel. This is very significant, as showing he is addressing a people to whom such references were not necessary even if intelligible, for the Gentiles knew nothing of the sacred prophesies and were not in expectation of any Great One of whom they also spoke. For the same reason, observe that Mark omits any genealogical table, as it is not necessary for him to prove the Abrahamic descent of Jesus. All allusion to His birth and infancy is also omitted, most probably for the same reason, and further throughout the whole Gospel. It is found on careful examination that all the omissions in Mark as compared with Matthew are of a special Jewish character. It will also be discovered that Mark feels the real necessity to explain certain Jewish words and customs which he would pass unnoticed if addressing Jews. To illustrate this, read as found in 5:41; 7:34, and 7: 1-4.

And He took the child's hand and said to her, Talitha koumi; (which interpreted is, Little girl, I say to you, arise!) (Mark 5:41) (NKJV)

And looking up to Heaven, He sighed and said to him, Ephphatha! (that is, Be opened!) (Mark 7 :34) (NKJV)

And the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of His disciples eating loaves with unclean hands, that is with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they immerse *their* hands with the fist, holding the tradition of the elders. And coming from the market, they do not eat without immersing, and there are many other things which they have received to hold, the dippings of cups and pots, and of copper vessels, and of tables. (Mark 7: 1-4) (NKJV)

However, it may be further deduced that Mark is not only addressing a Gentile people, but the two great Gentile peoples of that day, the Romans and the Greeks. The Romans represented the idea of active power in the world. Their idea was military power and glory. They were the people who, most of all, did things. Their highest conception of power, might and authority, was themselves, the Roman State. Although they worshipped the Emperor giving him the undeserved title “son of God”, they were really worshipping the state considered as represented in him. Their spiritual need as a people grew out of this fact; it grew out of their failure to attain their ideal in the state; for with all their power, might and authority they saw that injustice, cruelty and suffering still prevailed, and would inevitably continue to do so.

Now the Gospel of Mark will be found on close examination to fit this condition of things, suggesting that it was to meet the Roman need. For example, it very noticeably sets forth Jesus as the active servant of Jehovah. The whole trend of the Gospel vibrates of energy, power, movement, conquest, as attractive to such people as the Romans. For a start, it is the briefest Gospel, sixteen chapters only as compared with twenty-eight in Matthew, evidently it was intended for a people not given to thought as much as action. It omits chiefly the discourses rather than the deeds of Jesus, for example, the sermon on the Mount, a large part of the charge to the twelve and of the discourse on the second coming. Also, the things which Mark adds, as distinguished from Matthew, are those to draw the attention of men of affairs and action. Concerning the energetic movement of the Gospel, it is interesting to note the frequent employment of the word “straightway” as found in the Revised Version, occurring about forty-two times. More precisely, the Greek word “*euthys* or *eutheōs*”, translated “straightway”, “immediately,” “forthwith”, “anon” is used forty-two times, more times than in all the rest of the New Testament.

And yet what has been said, does not quite express, what is found in Mark as distinct from Matthew, and indeed from all the Gospels. It represents Jesus, indeed, as the man of mighty energy and power – a servant in that sense, and yet it represents Him in the lowly and patient sense of service as well. Concerning

the differences between the four Gospels, the early church fathers employed the four cherubim or “living creatures” as emblematic of the four Gospels, namely the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle (Rev. 4:7).

And the first living creature *was* like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. (Rev. 4:7) (MKJV)

It is under the first figure, “the lion of the tribe of Judah,” that Jesus is represented in Matthew, but under the second, the figure of service, that He is presented in Mark. He is here the patient labourer for others, if need be offering Himself in His service as a perfect sacrifice. There is also a fitness in Mark for presenting Jesus from that point of view, for himself was the minister, and the servant of the apostles.

And having come to himself, Peter said, ‘Now I know surely that *the* Lord has sent His angel and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.’ And thinking *about it* , he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose last name was Mark; where many had gathered together to pray. (Acts 12: 11-12) (NKJV)

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark *and* bring *him* with you, for he is profitable to me for *the* ministry. (2 Timothy 4: 11) (NKJV)

Let us study the Gospel of Mark, side by side with the thoughts of Christ’s energy and power, together with His humility and patience, dwelling as such upon His mighty works.

Outline of the Gospel

An outline of Mark is difficult to construct because of the impressionistic character of the Gospel. Mark does not specialise in character sketches, although many of the personalities in his pages are etched more sharply than are those in Matthew. The young man in the garden who escaped from the soldiers (14: 51-52), Alexander and Rufus (15:21), and Simon the leper (14:3) are mentioned as acquaintances of the author, and possibly of the readers. The allusion to Alexander and Rufus is particularly intriguing, for it implies that Mark’s readers knew these men and were their contemporaries. If Rufus is identical with the man mentioned in Romans 16:13, the dating of Mark somewhere between A.D. 56 and 66 and its origin at Rome might be confirmed. Mark, however, does not

mention as many persons as does Luke, nor does he use them as patterns to the same extent that Luke and John do; he seems to have been more interested in the progress of his story than in analysis of individual characters. The naming of these persons suggests that later they may have become celebrities in the Christian Church prior to the writing of the Gospel.

While in the Gospel of John we have a presentation of His divine glory as Son of God, in the Gospel of Mark, the whole record is consistent with the presentation of the Lord Jesus as Servant of Jehovah, serving others in love. Centuries before the coming of Christ, Isaiah had foretold that the Lord Jesus would come into the world as the Servant of Jehovah (God), for the word of the Lord came to the prophet saying, “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My Elect, *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit on Him; He shall bring out judgment to the nations. (Isaiah 42: 1)” All the details of this gospel have in view the presentation of His perfect service for needy man, as the Servant of Jehovah carrying out His will.

I.	The Preparation of the Way of the Lord	Chapter 1: 1-20
II.	The Perfect Servant	Chapter 1: 21-45
III.	The Ministry of the Lord	Chapter 2
IV.	The Change of Dispensation	Chapter 3
V.	Fruit for God and Light for Man	Chapter 4
VI.	The Individual Blessing of Souls	Chapter 5
VII.	The Service of Christ when Rejected	Chapter 6
VIII	Man exposed and God Revealed	Chapter 7
IX	Christ in the Outside Place	Chapter 8
X	The Power of the World to Come	Chapter 9
XI	Suffering and Glory	Chapter 10: 1-45
XII	Rejection of the King	Chapters 10 to 11: 26
XIII	The Rejection of the Leaders	Chapters 11:27 to 12: 44
XIV	The Great Tribulation	Chapter 13
XV	The Shadow of the Cross	Chapter 14
XVI	The Cross	Chapter 15
XVII	The Resurrection and Ascension	Chapter 16

Five Series Studies in the Gospel of Mark

First Series - Mark Chapters 1 to 3

First lesson – Mark 1: 1-13

See in what two ways John the Baptist did prepare the way of the Lord? Observe how Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all active in the recorded events, and note also Satan's activity. What can we learn from this reading about the powers of good and evil competing in the mind of man today?

“Put on the whole armour of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world's rulers, of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness in high *places* . Therefore, take to yourselves the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6: 11-13)” (NKJV)

Second Lesson – Mark 1: 14-34

Here opens the ministry of Jesus in Galilee.

“And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent, and believe the gospel. And walking along beside the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, Come after Me and I will make you fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed Him. (Mark 1: 14-18)” (NKJV)

“And now I stand and am judged for *the* hope of the promise made to our fathers by God, to which *promise* our twelve tribes hope to attain, serving God fervently night and day. For the sake of this hope, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. (Acts 26: 6-7)” (MKJV)

When it is remembered with what intense eagerness all Israel looked for the coming of God's kingdom, consider for yourself what a thrill of excited expectancy the message of Jesus arouse. What new request did Jesus add to John's command to repent?

However, in this time and age, put yourself in the place of the four disciples whom Jesus called to follow Him, re-living their experiences as described in

verses 16-34. Just as searcher to spiritual values, or as new-born Christian have you had any comparable experience in your life? After all, the lack of riches and human learning is no hindrance to being a companion of the Lord, or to be used in His service. Nevertheless, however humble one may be, the calling of those the Lord may engage in His service are never unemployed. These simple men were pursuing their occupation of fishermen, when the Lord called them to become fishers of men. The Lord's service is not to be taken up by those who have nothing else to do.

Third Lesson – Mark 1: 35 – 2: 12

The Lord's tour in Galilee. After the astonishing events of the preceding day Jesus had to consider what He should do next. How did He arrive at a decision, and what was His decision? What bearing has this upon our prayer life; and, upon our Church's missionary duty?

“Then Jesus said to them again, Peace to you. As *My Father* has sent *Me*, even so I send you. (John 20: 21)” (NKJV)

And He said to them, Go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to all the creation. (Mark 16: 15) (NKJV)

Consider also how the healed leper, by disobedience, interrupted the Lord's strategy. Have we been guilty of like negligence ? Had you been present when the sick man was laid before Jesus (2: 4), what do you think you would have noticed most? What did Jesus see, and what other evidences do you find in the story of His powers of discernment?

“And as He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, at the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all and did not need that anyone should testify of man. For He knew what was in man. (John 2: 23-25)” (NKJV)

“And they prayed and said, You, Lord, knower of all hearts, show which one You chose from these two, to take the share of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell, to go to *his* own place. (Acts 1: 24-25)” (NKJV)

Fourth Lesson – Mark 2: 13 -3: 6

Beginnings of opposition. Levi or Matthew, who was a publican or tax collector, was sitting in the tax office when Jesus called him. In what ways did he demonstrate the reality of his faith, and how is he an example to us?

“And He went up into a mountain and called near those whom He would. And they came to Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them out to proclaim, and to have authority to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons. And He put on Simon *the* name Peter. And He put on James *the son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, *the* names Boanerges, which is, the Sons of Thunder. And *He appointed* Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James *the son* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. And they went into a house. (Mark 3: 13-19)” (NKJV)

Jesus did not come to call the righteous, how can the righteous enter His kingdom?

The apostle Paul gives the answer:

“For we are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh; though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other thinks that he has reason to trust in the flesh, I more. I was circumcised *the* eighth day, of *the* stock of Israel, of *the* tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. As regards the Law, *I was* a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness in the Law, blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. But no, rather, I also count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them *to be* dung, so that I may win Christ and be found in Him; not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but through *the* faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death; if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.” (Philippians 3: 3-11) (NKJV)

What evidence is there that even at this early stage of His ministry, Jesus foresaw His violent death?

“But they were silent”, we read in verse 4. This silence was not that lowly grace that marked the Lord Jesus when in the presence of insults, He answered never a word. It was the silence of mere policy and, more eloquently than words, exposed the impotent hatred of their hearts. The Lord looked upon them with righteous anger, but behind the anger there was distress. He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts that was wholly indifferent to the need of the man, perfectly helpless to meet that need, and bitterly opposed to the One who had both the grace and the power to bless. The men that would not allow the Lord to

do well on the Sabbath, were perfectly prepared to do evil. They simply watched to accuse Him; now they take counsel to destroy our Saviour.

Fifth Lesson – Mark 3: 7-19a

The calling of the twelve, while the malice of the Jews as described above, cannot stay the grace of the Lord, or check His unwearied service of love.

In what two ways does Mark indicate that the crowds were greater than ever? Do you think that this, coupled with what is said in verse 6, had anything to do with the new step Jesus took in appointing the Twelve? What do you see in verses 14 and 15, concerning the purpose of their appointment? How were they chosen, and what was their response? Finally, consider these twelve men. What is it that is conspicuous about them?

Sixth Lesson – Mark 3: 19b – 35

Attempt to stop Jesus' work. The first attempt was made by Jesus' family. The new paragraph here begins with verse 19b, and verses 19b to 21 are connected with verses 31-35. The words 'His friends' in verse 21 mean literally 'they from His home', and might be translated 'His family'. How did they regard Him (verse 21), and how did He regard them (verse 33)? Did he mean to disown them, or was it only that he was distinguishing between the natural sphere, in which they were His kinsfolk, and the kingdom of God, where kinship rests on grounds other than that of blood-relationship? The second attempt was made by the scribes from Jerusalem. How did they look out to discredit Jesus? Our Lord's reply falls into three parts. He disapproves their assertion, sets forth the true explanation of His power over evil spirits, and gives a solemn warning. Explain His argument.

Your self-examination or written work.

1. Looking back over the three chapters, what are the evidences of Jesus' popularity, and what of growing opposition.
2. Who were for Him and who were against Him, and on what grounds?
3. How also did Jesus deal with the criticism and opposition directed against Him?
4. What indications do you find that already an inner circle of disciples was forming around our Lord, and that He encouraged this development?
5. What strikes you most about Jesus in Mark's picture of Him at the beginning of His ministry.

Second Series – Mark Chapters 4 to 7: 23

First Lesson – Mark 4: 1-20

Illustration of Jesus' teaching with parable. What does the parable really teach concerning (a) the reasons why even the teaching of Jesus failed to produce fruit in the lives of many of the hearers: (b) the condition by which true success is measured in gospel preaching: and (c) the method by which the kingdom of God comes in this present age. 'He that has ears to hear, let him hear;' Is the Word entering in your heart (verse 15)? Is it taking deep root (verses 16 and 17)? Are you allowing some other harvest to mature in your heart (verses 18 and 19)? What measure of fruit is being produced in your life (verse 20)?

Second Lesson – Mark 4: 21-34

Further illustrations of Jesus' teaching by parables. How is the responsibility of the hearer brought out in verses 21-25, first, for what he does with his knowledge, and second, for his attitude to what he hears? The parable in verses 26-29 is peculiar to this Gospel. Assuming that the casting in of the seed represents the ministry of Jesus, that the seed and the soil represent the Word and the mind of man respectively, and that the harvest represents the Lord's return, what can we learn (a) as to the significance of Jesus' first coming; (b) as to the vitality of the Word as it works in the human heart; and (c) as to what will take place at the end of the present age? How does our Lord in the parable of the mustard seed describe the beginnings of the kingdom, and how its final end? Do we share His magnificent confidence as to the final issue of His work?

Third Lesson – Mark 4: 35 – 5: 20

Instances of Jesus' powerful works. In the story of the storm, what were the disciples surprised at in Jesus, and what was He surprised at them? Can we learn from all this? Contrast what men had attempted, without success, to do for the demoniac, with what Jesus did for him. Ponder on this as an illustration of the difference between man's way of reducing evil by restraint and the Lord's way of inward transformation. Notice the instructions given by the Lord to the healed man in verse 19. What bearing has this on our own witness? Contrast these instructions with Mark 1: 44. How do you account for the difference?

“And He said to him, See that you say nothing to anyone. But go and show yourself to the priest, and offer those things which Moses commanded for your cleansing, for a testimony to them. (1: 44)” (NKJV)

References in the Four Gospels to the expulsion of demons in specific instances:

Demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum: Mark 1: 21-28; Luke 4: 31-37.

Dumb demoniac: Matthew 9: 32-34.

Daughter of the Syrophenician woman: Matthew 15: 21-28; Mark 7: 24 – 30.

Gadarene demoniacs: Matthew: 8: 28-34; Mark 5: 1-20; Luke 8: 26-39.

Blind and mute demoniac: Matthew 12: 22; Luke 11: 14.

Epileptic child: Matthew 17: 14-21; Mark 9: 14-29; Luke 9: 37-43

Miracles of physical healing in the Gospels

A leper	Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5: 12-15
A paralytic	Matthew 9: 2-8; Mark 2: 3-12; Luke 5: 18-26
Fever (Peter's mother-in-law)	Matthew 8: 14-17; Mark 1: 29-31
Nobleman's son healed	John 4: 46-53
Physical infirmity	John 5: 1-9
A withered hand	Matthew 12: 9-13; Mark 3: 1- 6; Luke 6: 6-11
Deafness and dumbness	Mark 7: 31-37
Blindness at Bethsaida	Mark 8: 22-25
Same in Jerusalem	John 9
Bartimaeus	Mark 10: 46-52
Ten lepers	Luke 17: 11-19
Malchus' severed ear	Luke 22: 47-51
Haemorrhage	Matthew 9: 20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8: 43-48
Dropsy	Luke 11: 1-44

An important key to divine healing is that we must get our eyes off the impossible, the pain and symptoms of sickness and disease in our bodies, and obey Christ's Word to us. Spiritual timing is important, as whenever there is a flow of God's anointing, you must jump into the waters of God's healing power. God's Word declares that by the stripes which Christ took upon His back, we are healed! We must look to Christ, our Saviour, and act in obedience to His commands.

Miracles of resurrection

Jairus' daughter	Matthew 9: 18-26; Mark 5: 35-43; Luke 8: 41-56
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Widow's son	Luke 7: 11-15
Lazarus of Bethany	John 11: 1-44

Miracles of nature

Water converted to wine at Cana	John 2: 1-11
Stilling of storm	Matthew 8: 23-27; Mark 4: 35-41; Luke 8: 22-25
Supernatural catch of fish	Luke 5: 1-11; John 21:6
Multiplying food	Matthew 14: 15-21; Mark 6: 34-44
5000 fed	Luke 9: 11-17; John 6: 1-14
4000 fed	Matthew 15: 32-39; Mark 8: 1-9
Walking on water	Matthew 14: 22-33; Mark 6: 45-52; John 6:19
Money from a fish	Matthew 17: 24-27
Fig tree dried up	Matthew 21: 18-22; Mark 11: 12-14

Fourth Lesson – Mark 5: 21 – 6: 6a

Further instances of Jesus' powerful works. What brought the woman to Jesus? Why did she come, as it were, by furtiveness ? Why did the Lord not allow her to slip away unobserved? What additional benefit did she gain from speaking with Him face to face? What may we learn from these things? What traits in our Lord's character are revealed in this section? How does the passage 6: 1-6a illustrates the importance of our Lord's words in 1: 15 – 'Believe the good news?' What kept the people of Nazareth from believing, and what impoverishment did they suffer in consequence?

“And He went out from there and came into His native-place. And His disciples followed Him. And when the sabbath day had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* , were astonished, saying, Where does this one get these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to him, that even such mighty works are done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor, except in his native-place, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And He could do no work of power there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick ones, He healed *them*. And He marvelled because of their unbelief. (Mark 6: 1-6a)” (NKJV)

“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1: 15)” (NKJV)

Fifth Lesson – Mark 6: 6b – 29

The first mission of the Twelve. In the sending out of the Twelve, observe the contrast between the greatness of their commission and authority (verses 7 and 11) and their simplicity of life. Is there a lesson here for us today? What evidence do you find that their mission caused a great stir? How would you sum up Herod's character? What were the causes of his failure?

“And He called the Twelve and began to send them out by two and two. And He gave them authority over unclean spirits, and commanded them that they take nothing in *the* way, except only a staff; no bag, no bread, no copper in the belt, but tying on sandals, and not to put on two tunics. And He said to them, Wherever you enter into a house, abide there until you depart from *that place*, And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Truly I say to you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. (Mark 6: 7-11)” (NKJV)

Sixth Lesson - Mark 6: 30-56

Crisis and culmination of the Galilean ministry.

Then seeing the miracle that Jesus did, those men said, This is truly the Prophet, the *One* coming into the world. Therefore when Jesus perceived that they would come and take Him by force, that they might make Him a king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain alone *by Himself*. (John 6: 14-15)” (NKJV)

What is the significance, today in the 21st century for His followers of the Lord's command to His disciples as in verse 37 and of the whole miracle. (Mark 16: 5) Picture the situation described in verses 45-53! The disciples were acting in obedience to the Lord's command, yet in distress because of an opposing wind, and Jesus, so it seemed, far away. Have you known any such experience? What light does the story throw upon the life of discipleship, upon the trials and its deliverances?

“He answered and said to them, You give them *food* to eat. And they said to Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii of loaves and give them to eat? (Mark 6: 37)” (NKJV)

“And He said to them, Go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to all the creation. (Mark 16: 15)” (NKJV)

Lesson Seven – Mark 7: 1-23

Conflict with the Pharisees, and scribes from Jerusalem. In answering the question of verse 5 Jesus divides His reply into two parts, dealing first with the general question of observing the tradition of the elders (verses 6-13), and then with the question of defilement (verses 14-23). In answering the latter question, He lays down in verse 15a general principle, and develops it in its two parts, the first in verses 18-19, and the second in verses 20-23.

What did Jesus say of ‘the tradition of the elders’, and what example did He give of its anti-scriptural teaching? Note how verse 21 destroys the illusion that thoughts do not matter if they never take shape in acts. Are we looking for deliverance from the uncleanness of an evil heart, or, like the Pharisees, content with a fair appearance outwardly?

Method and purposes of the Servant’s miracles.

Jesus did not work miracles solely by virtue of His deity, but in the person of His sinless humanity united to Deity. It was the Holy Spirit working in unhindered power through the medium of Jesus’ undefiled human nature who wrought these mighty signs by the spoken word, occasionally combined with physical agents such as clay and saliva. The purpose of the Servant’s miracles was to authenticate the King (Matthew), the Servant (Mark), the Man (Luke) and God (John) as Creator-Redeemer. God become man, the eternal Word become flesh, Israel’s King and the world’s Saviour. Jesus’ miracles were outward proofs of His deity and messiahship (cf. John 15:24). They also were the expression of His love for and identification with the human race, performed for its redemption from suffering, sin and death. Most of Jesus’ miracles are unrecorded (compare Matthew 4: 24; Luke 4: 40; Mark 6: 53-56; Luke 6: 17-19; Matthew 15: 30-31; John 21:25). Those that are recorded, as in John’s Gospel (John 20: 30-31), are highly selected for a specific purpose, namely to arouse faith in Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Holy Name.

Your self-examination or written work.

1. So, far from Chapter 1 to 7: 23, what witness does the Gospel of Mark bear to Christ as firstly the Son of Man, and secondly the Son of God?
2. Miracles have been called ‘parables in action’. So far, extract the teaching from those recorded in the first seven chapters.

Third Series – Mark Chapters 7: 24 to 10: 31

First Lesson – Mark 7: 24-37

Ministry to the north and east of the Lake of Galilee. Why did Jesus at first seem to refuse the woman's petition, and how did she finally obtain her request? What may we learn from her concerning faith?

“But He answered and said, I am not sent except to the lost sheep of *the* house of Israel. (Matthew 15: 24)” (NKJV)

Can you see any reasons why the healing of the deaf and dumb man should have been effected in a way which appears difficult and laborious? Consider how this man have known little or nothing about Jesus by reason of his limitations. Put yourself in his place, and reflect what the actions of Jesus would suggest to him, so quickening his expectancy.

“Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith let it be to you. (Matthew 9: 29)” (NKJV)

Second Lesson – Mark 8: 1-26

“In those days, the crowd being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them, I have compassion on the crowd because they have now been with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way. For many of them come from afar. And His disciples answered Him, From where can a man satisfy these *with* loaves here in the wilderness? And He asked them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven. And He commanded the people to recline on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, and He broke and gave to His disciples to set before them. And they set *them before* the people. And they had a few fish. And He blessed and commanded them to also serve these. So they ate and were filled. And *they* took up over and above seven lunch baskets *of* fragments. And they who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away. (Mark 7: 1-9)” (NKJV)

What two characteristics features in the Lord Jesus stand out in the miracle of chapter 8: 1-9? Why was it that the Pharisees did not believe in Him? Verses 14-21 show that discipleship involves thought and reflection on the Christian experience, leading to growth in spiritual understanding. Are you growing spiritually?

“And David said, The LORD who has delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go, and may the LORD be with you. (1 Samuel 17: 37)” (NKJV)

Consider the story of verses 22-26 as an illustration of Philippians 1: 6. Compare also Paul’s prayer for those to whom he was writing in Ephesians 1: 17-20.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1: 6)” (NKJV)

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what *is* the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength which He worked *in* Christ in raising Him from *the* dead, and He seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 1: 17-20)” (NKJV)

Third Lesson – Mark 7: 27-38

Confession of Jesus as the Christ. What lay behind Peter’s protest in verse 32, and why did the Lord rebuke him so severely? What implications for the Christian are here involved with regard to self, to Christ, and to the world? Two alternative courses are presented in verses 35-37, and each must make his choice between them. What does Jesus declare will be the final result of choosing wrongly?

Fourth Lesson – Mark 9: 1-29

In the transfiguration scene, we see Elijah and Moses representing the first Covenant, the three disciples representing the New Covenant, Jesus in the midst in heavenly glory, and around the whole the cloud, symbolic of the presence of God. Contemplate this picture of eternal realities. Have you a part in it? What question did the scene raise in the minds of the three disciples who witnessed it? How did Jesus reply? Consider how closely John the Baptist resembled Elijah. The scene at the foot of the mount. Why was Jesus so disappointed at what He found? What does the story teach concerning the importance of faith, and the necessity of prayer?

Fifth Lesson – Mark 9: 30 – 50

‘If any man desire to be the first’ in the kingdom of God, what must he be? What three reasons does Jesus give in verses 39-41 why the disciples should not have acted as they did? Jesus urges in verses 43-48 the amputation of a limb that the life may be saved. Did He mean the literal amputation of a limb and, if not, what did He mean?

Sixth Lesson – Mark 10: 1-16

What is the considered judgment of Christ regarding divorce, and on what grounds does He base it? How does the incident of the children support and encourage every effort to bring children everywhere to Jesus? What is it to receive the kingdom of God ‘as a little child’? How does a little child receive the good things of this life?

Seventh Lesson – Mark 10: 17-31

This is the story of the young ruler. Jesus here applies the general principle of 7: 34 to a particular case.

“And looking up to Heaven, He sighed and said to him, Ephphatha! (that is, Be opened!) (Mark 7: 34)” (NKJV)

There is often some particular hindrance that holds people back. What was it in the case of this man? What lesson did Jesus draw from the incident for the benefit of His disciples? What may those who leave all to follow Christ expect in this world, and in the world to come? However, what is the meaning of the warning in verse 31? Do compare with 1 Corinthians 13: 3.

“But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first. (Mark 10: 31)” (NKJV)

“And though I give out all my goods to feed *the poor* , and though I deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am profited nothing. (1 Corinthians 13.3)” (NKJV)

Your self-examination or written work.

1. Give your comments on Mark 10: 21. How does Jesus’ saying or command fit in today’s world?

Fourth Series – Mark Chapters 10 to 14

First Lesson – Mark 10: 32 – 52

Moving on towards Jerusalem. How many times has Jesus spoken of His sufferings, along Mark's record, and what effect had it upon His disciples? Are our hearts responsive to this aspect of His teaching?

“But may it never be for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6: 14)” (NKJV)

What is the difference between greatness in the world, and greatness in the kingdom of God? How is it exemplified in the Lord Himself? Would Bartimaeus have received his sight if he had not cried out? If we mourn our spiritual poverty and barrenness, may not the reason lie here? How would you characterise Bartimaeus' prayer?

“Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For each one who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. (Matthew 7: 7-8)” (NKJV)

“You desire, and do not have. You murder, and are jealous, and cannot obtain. You fight and war, yet you have not because you ask not. (James 4: 2)” (NKJV)

Second Lesson – Mark 11: 1-19

The public entry into Jerusalem. Jesus had so far refrained from publicly declaring His Messiahship. See Chapter 3: 11, 12; Chapter 7: 30 and Chapter 9: 9. Why did He declare it now? Assuming that the fig-tree was to our Lord a symbol of Jerusalem, what lesson does His act of judgment upon it teach?

“He also spoke this parable: A certain *man* had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard. And he came and sought fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none. Cut it down, why does it encumber the ground? And answering, he said to him, Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and throw manure. And if it bears fruit, *well* ; and if not, then after that you shall cut it down. (Luke 13: 6-9)” (NKJV)

What features of our Lord's character are specially exhibited in the incidents of lesson's portion?

Third Lesson – Mark 11: 20-33

Reflect on the situation in which the Lord found Himself at this time. How many and strong, humanly speaking, were the forces against Him, and yet how quiet and confident He was in His faith in God! What does He tell us are the essential conditions of prevailing prayer? "Neither do I tell you", Jesus said. Why did Jesus refuse to give an answer? How had these men shown that they had not the capacity to judge the point at issue?

Fourth Lesson – Mark 12: 1 – 27

Observe in the parable of the vineyard and our Lord's comment upon it, as His connection with and yet difference from the prophets; and how the Holy Scriptures foretell His rejection and yet assign to Him the highest place. The representation of the Pharisees and Herodians came in the guise of honest inquirers, but their purpose was to lay a trap for the Lord. If, as One who claimed to be the Messiah, He said it was right to pay tribute, they could discredit Him with the people; if He said it was wrong, they could accuse Him to the Roman governor. How did Jesus escape the snare, and what important truth is taught by His reply? Regarding the future life what do we learn from these verses concerning the change of nature, and the continuity of identity? On what ground does Jesus base the certainty of resurrection?

*"And what you sow, you do not sow the body that *is* going to be, but a bare grain (perhaps of wheat or of some of the rest). And God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to each of the seeds its own body. (1 Corinthians 15: 37-38)" (NKJV)*

Fifth Lesson – Mark 12: 28-44

Jesus pronounced this scribe to be 'not far from the Kingdom of God'. What would he have needed to do to enter in the Kingdom of God? What is the difference in meaning between the phrases 'with all your heart', 'with all your soul', and so and forth, in verse 30. Contrast the scribes and the widow, as described in verses 38-44. What, in the case of the former, elicited censure, and in the case of the latter praise from our Lord? Examine your own conduct and motives in the light of these verses.

Sixth Lesson – Mark 13: 1-23

Teaching about the future. The Lord first gives a general forecast of what His disciples would meet with. Against what three dangers in particular does He warn them? Read verses 1-13. In verses 14-23 Jesus discloses the sign of destruction of the Temple, about which the four disciples had asked (verse 4). What four vivid illustrations does He give of the need of hasty departure when the sign appeared? What injunction is repeated three times in verses 5-23 and what other counsels are given applicable to ourselves.

Seventh Lesson – Mark 13: 24-37

Would you say that Jesus' picture is bright or dark? How shall we practically fulfil the command to "watch"? Are we sufficiently awake to the fact that the day of Christ is not past, but is to come? Does our manner of life attest our faith in Christ's ultimate and possibly imminent triumphant return; or, if He came, would He find us sleeping?

Your self-examination or written work.

1. The "Servant of the Lord" is pictures in Isaiah Chapter 42; Chapter 49; Chapter 50; Chapters 52: 13 and 53. Find correspondences between these prophecies and Jesus Christ as seen in this Gospel so far.

Time of the second Coming

Did the Son of God not know the time of His second coming? "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24: 36; Mark 13: 32) In the Gospel of Mark, the Lord takes the place of humiliation as a Servant and the servant is properly presented as he who does not know his master's business. (John 15:15) After His servanthship was discharged in death and He was raised in glory, the glorified Son omnisciently knew all, having this particular disclosure given to Him (Revelation 1: 1)

Fifth Series – Mark Chapters 14 to 16

Order of the events of the crucifixion

Arrival at Golgotha (Calvary)	Matthew 27:33
Offer of a benumbing drink	Matthew 27:34
The crucifixion	Matthew 27:35
First Cry, “Father, forgive...”	Luke 23: 34
The parting of Christ’s garments	Matthew 27: 35
Jesus mocked	Matthew 27: 39-44; Mark 15:29
The thieves rail on Him, but one believes	Matthew 27: 44
Second cry, “Today you will be with me...”	Luke 23: 43
Third cry, “dear woman, here is your son”	John 19: 26-27
The darkness	Matthew 27: 45; Mark 15:33
Fourth cry, “My God, my God...”	Matthew 27: 46-47; Mark 15: 34-36
Fifth cry, “I am thirsty”	John 19: 28
Sixth cry, “It is finished”	John 19: 30
Seventh cry, “Father, into thy hands...”	Luke 23: 46
Jesus dismisses His spirit	Matthew 27: 50; Mark 15: 37

First Lesson – Mark 14: 1-25

What various attitudes towards Jesus are found in this section? How are these surprising reactions to be accounted for? On what four grounds did Jesus praise Mary? In the words “This is my body”, Jesus was speaking, as the words “blood...shed” in verse 24 show more clearly of His death.

“Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed by man; for He made man in the image of God. (Genesis 9: 6)” (NKJV)

“They have shed their blood like water round about Jerusalem, and none to bury. (Psalm 79: 3)” (NKJV)

Ponder the words “bread”, “blood”, “gave”, “take”, “eat”, “the new covenant”, as throwing light on the nature and method of salvation. The expression, “This is my body” corresponds to the Passover formula “This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of affliction.” To deduce the doctrine of transubstantiation from the passage, we should require different words, and a different historical context.

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from *your* fathers, but with *the* precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1: 18-19)” (NKJV)

“But as many as received Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name. (John 1: 12)” (NKJV)

“Received” is the same word as “take”.

“Then Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Moses did not give you that bread from Heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from Heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world. (John 6: 32-33)” (NKJV)

“I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, he shall live forever. And truly the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6: 32)” (NKJV)

“He who partakes of My flesh and drinks My blood dwells in Me, and I in him. (John 6: 56)” (NKJV)

Second Lesson – Mark 14: 26-52

In speaking as he did in verse 29, how did Peter display a wrong attitude both towards Christ and towards the Scriptures? Where lays the mistake of Peter and the rest? Are you contradicting the Lord in anything that He is saying to you? What is meant by “the hour” and “the cup” in verses 35 and 36? What exactly was our Lord’s petition? Was it answered and, if so, how?

“*For Jesus* , in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared, though being a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Hebrew 5: 7-8)” (NKJV)

In the hour of betrayal and arrest where did our Lord find support and guidance? What may we learn from this example?

“This *is* my comfort in my affliction; for Your word has given me life. (Psalm 119: 50)” (NKJV)

“Unless Your law *had been* my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction. (Psalm 119: 92)” (NKJV)

“Your word *is* a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. (Psalm 119: 105)” (NKJV)

Third Lesson – Mark 14: 53-72

The object of the Jewish Council was to find legal ground for putting Jesus to death. It had been previously decided that He must die (Mark 14: 1), but some ground must be sought, which would justify their action in condemning Him, and enable them to secure Pilate’s confirmation of the verdict.

Consider Jesus’ situation from a human standpoint, and then place in contrast the claim He makes. It is said that we cannot escape from the unalterable dilemma that either Christ deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or He was Himself deluded and self-deceived, or He was divine? Do you agree? Observe the various moods through which Peter passed on this eventful night (see Mark 14: 19, 29, and 31, as well as in this passage of the Gospel). Where was Peter when temptation assailed him and how did temptation come? Is it not a scene often repeated – a follower of Jesus among non-Christians, not having prayed, out of touch with the Lord, faced by a sudden question giving opportunity to confess Christ, and instead of confession, denial?

Fourth Lesson – Mark 15: 1-23

The main concern of the Jewish leaders was now to get their verdict carried out. For this, they required the Roman governor’s consent, for the Romans reserved to them the right of capital punishment.

What three wrong steps did Pilate take? We look back upon the scene from a distance and with condemnation. When people today choose expediency instead of truth and justice, are they not acting as Pilate did?

“Therefore you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges; for in that in which you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you who judge do the same things. (Romans 2: 1)” (NKJV)

Try to picture the mocking of the soldiers, remembering that Jesus had been scourged, a punishment of brutal severity. The insertion of the words “father of Alexander and Rufus” seem to imply that Simon became a Christian, and that his sons were well-known in the church. Assuming that his son Rufus is the Rufus of Romans 16: 13, let your imagination wave together the probable life story of Simon from its beginning to its end.

“Greet Rufus, chosen in *the* Lord, and his mother and mine. (Romans 16: 13)” (NKJV)

Fifth Lesson – Mark 15: 24-41

Mark gives none Old Testament Scripture that was fulfilled at the cross (verse 28). Can you think of others? What is the answer to the question in verse 34? What is the spiritual significance of the rending of the veil?

“The Holy Spirit signifying *by this that* the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. (Hebrews 9: 8)” (NKJV)

“Therefore, brothers, having boldness to enter into the *Holy of Holies* by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and *having* a High Priest over the house of God. (Hebrews 10: 19-21)” (NKJV)

“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. (Ephesians 2: 18)” (NKJV)

Sixth Lesson – Mark 15: 42 – 16: 8

What seven distinct acts are mentioned as having been done by Joseph of Arimathea? Considering who he was and the situation at the time, what qualities of character are shown by his behaviour? What reflections are suggested by the fact that though God did not intervene to save His Son from dying on the cross, yet He rescued His body from the unworthy burial usually given to those who had been crucified? What is involved in the fact that Jesus lives?

“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, Do not fear, I am the First and the Last, and the Living One, and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for ever and ever, Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1: 17-18)” (NKJV)

Order of the Events of the Resurrection

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome start for the tomb.	Luke 23: 55 – 24:1
They found the stone rolled away.	Luke 24: 2-9
Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples.	John 20: 1-2
Mary, the mother of James, draws near and sees the angel	Matthew 28: 1-2
She goes back to meet the other women following with spices	See quotation hereunder
Meanwhile peter and John arrive, look in and depart	John 20: 3-10
Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees two angels, then Jesus	John 20: 11-18
The risen Christ bids her tell the disciples	John 20: 17-18
Mary (mother of James) meanwhile returns with the women	Luke 24: 1-4
They return and see the two angels	Luke 24: 5; Mark 16: 5
They also hear the angel's message	Matthew 28: 6-8
On their way to find the disciples, they are met with the risen Christ	Matthew 28: 9-10

Seventh Lesson – Mark 16: 9-20

What three appearances of the risen Jesus are recorded in these verses? How came these morning, weeping, unbelieving men to believe in the resurrection with strength of conviction that neither the lapse of time nor any after circumstances could weaken, unless, in fact, Jesus did rise from the dead and appear to them.

“To whom He also presented Himself living after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them through forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (Acts 1: 3)” (NKJV)

“The Gospel” (verse 15 and chapter 1: 1). What is the significance of Jesus’ coming into the world? And, what duty does this impose upon those who are His followers?

“And He said to them, Go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to all the creation. (Mark 16: 15)” (NKJV)

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, *the* Son of God: as it is written in the Prophets, "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of *the* Lord, make His paths straight." John came baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And all the land of Judea, and those of Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a leather girdle about his loin. And he ate locusts and wild honey. And he proclaimed, saying, There is One coming after me who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down to loosen. I indeed have baptized you in water, but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit. And it happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him. And there came a voice from Heaven, *saying*, You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Mark 1: 1-11)” (NKJV)

If we truly believe in what is recorded in verse 19, ought not verse 20 to become true of us also?

“Then indeed, after speaking to them, the Lord was taken up into Heaven, and sat on *the* right hand of God. And going out, they proclaimed everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word by *miraculous* signs following. Amen. (Mark 16: 19-20)” (NKJV)

Your self-examination or written work.

1. The Period of the Triumph in chapter 16: 1-20 is not essentially different in its character from the similar record by Matthew, except as to the promised cooperation of power in execution of the Great Commission, so-called. This too, is fitting and appropriate as harmonising with the distinctive purpose of Mark in presenting Jesus to the Romans, the people whose ideal was power, power to accomplish things. Comment on this passage yourself.
2. Trace the note of conflict and controversy throughout the Gospel.
3. What internal evidence is there of Peter's authority behind the Evangelist Mark?

Post-resurrection appearances

To Mary Magdalene
To the women returning from the tomb

John 20: 14-18; Mark 16:9
Matthew 28: 8-10

To Peter later during the day	Luke 24: 34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
To the disciples going to Emmaus in the evening	Luke 24: 13-31
To the apostles (except Thomas)	Luke 24: 36-45; John 20: 19-24
To the apostles a week later (Thomas present)	John 20: 24-29
In Galilee to the seven by the Lake of Tiberias	John 21: 1-23
In Galilee on a mountain to the apostles and five-hundred believers	1 Corinthians 15: 6
At Jerusalem and Bethany again to James	1 Corinthians 15: 7
At Olivet and the ascension	Acts 1: 3-12
To Paul near Damascus	Acts 9: 3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8
To Stephen outside Jerusalem	Acts 7: 55
To Paul in the temple	Acts 22: 17-21; 23: 11
To John on Patmos	Revelation 1: 10-19

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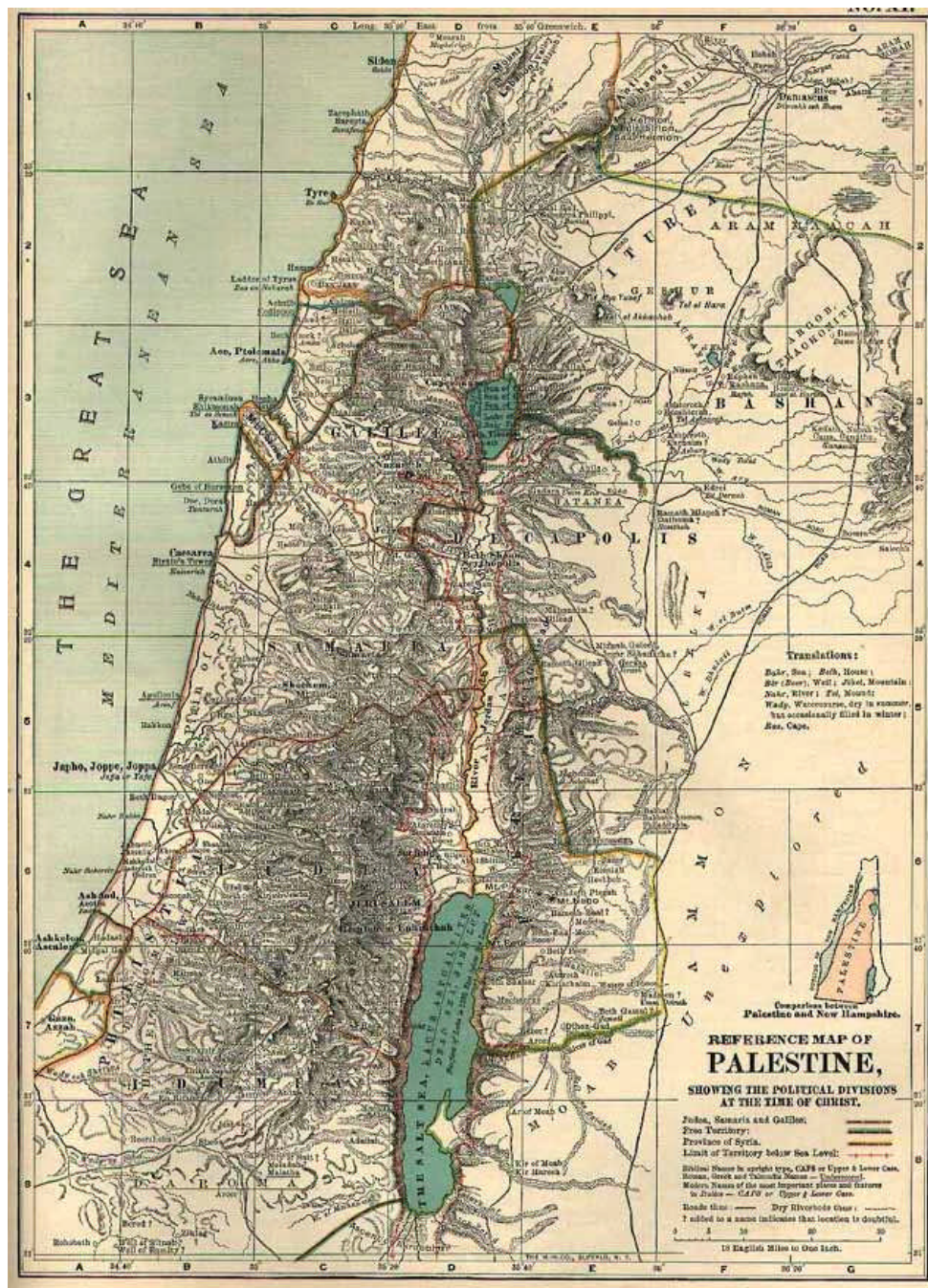
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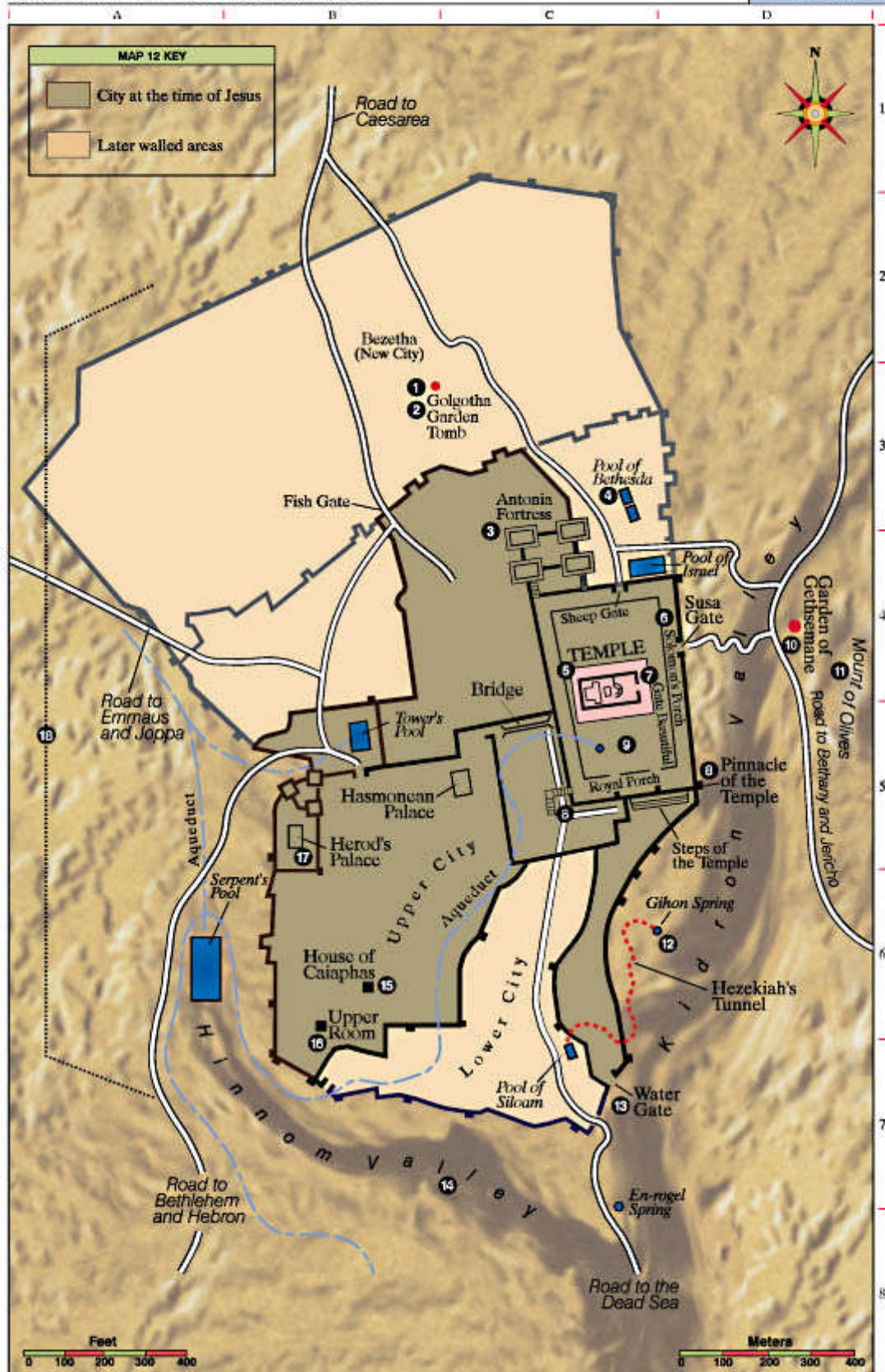
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STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK - MAPS OF PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST AND OF JERUSALEM (PUBLIC DOMAIN)



JERUSALEM AT THE TIME OF JESUS

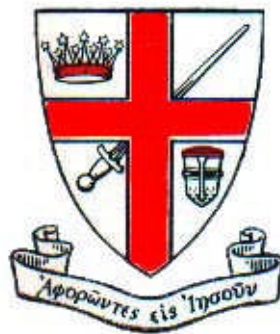
MAP 12



The Precious Blood of Christ

Standing at the foot of the cross, we see hands, and feet, and side, all distilling crimson streams of precious blood. It is 'precious' because of its *redeeming* and *atoning efficacy*. By it the sins of Christ's people are atoned for; they are redeemed from under the law; they are reconciled to God, made one with him. Christ's blood is also 'precious' in its *cleansing power*; it 'cleanseth from all sin.' 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Through Jesus' blood there is not a spot left upon any believer, no wrinkle nor any such thing remains. Oh precious blood, which makes us clean, removing the stains of abundant iniquity, and permitting us to stand accepted in the beloved, notwithstanding the many ways in which we have rebelled against our God. The blood of Christ is likewise 'precious' in its *preserving power*. We are safe from the destroying angel under the sprinkled blood. Remember it is *God's seeing* the blood which is the true reason for our being spared. Here is comfort for us when the eye of faith is dim, for God's eye is still the same. The blood of Christ is 'precious' also in its *sanctifying influence*. The same blood which justifies by taking away sin, does in its later action, quicken the new nature and lead it onward to subdue sin and to follow out the commands of God. There is no motive for holiness so great as that which streams from the veins of Jesus. And 'precious,' unspeakably precious, is this blood, because it has an *overcoming power*. It is written, 'They overcame through the blood of the Lamb.' How could they do otherwise? He who fights with the precious blood of Jesus, fights with a weapon which cannot know defeat. The blood of Jesus! Sin dies at its presence, death ceases to be death: heaven's gates are opened. The blood of Jesus! we shall march on, conquering and to conquer, so long as we can trust its power!

(Anon)



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